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## THE HISTORY OF EARLY EDUCATION

### HELLENIC EDUCATION—*continued.*

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### ATHENIAN AND IONIC-ATTIC EDUCATION.

We turn now to the chief representative of the Greek spirit—the Athenian. All that we have said of the Hellenic mind and of the Hellenic life-ideals in introducing the subject of Hellenic education found its finest and fullest expression in Attica. As in the case of Sparta, we find that to the Athenian as to all true Greeks, the state or city was the object round which gathered all their interests and all their moral sentiment. Nay, we may even say that the city was the object of their worship, for their very gods were gods to them as protectors and lovers of the beautiful abode which their artistic hands had reared. But the Athenian state in the narrow sense of the governing body or executive did not unduly predominate over the lives of the citizen. Their democratic constitution and popular assemblies brought the governing body into perpetual contact with public opinion—variable and fickle, doubtless, but yet full of ever-fresh suggestion. The despotic socialism of Sparta had no place. The State did not impose its abstract conception of life on the citizen; it was rather the citizen in his free activity who voluntarily gave his life to the State. The individual had, it is true, no rights as against the State organism; but it was felt that the State itself gained most by the free development of the individual. (See Pericles' speech.) Accordingly, while up to the 5th century B. C. we might say that even in Athens the morality of the individual was a civic or political morality, the elements of personality and a free ethics existed even before Socrates, and were powerfully expressed in literature.

The Athenian education was in this as in other respects a reflex of the Athenian life.

"It is evident," says Professor Wilkins, "that a national system of education in the strictest sense of the term would have been

wholly foreign to the genius of the Athenian State. To force every citizen from childhood into the same rigid mould, to crush the play of the natural emotions and impulses, and to sacrifice the beauty and joy of the life of the agora, or the country-home, to the claims of military drill, were aims which were happily rendered needless by the position of Attica, as well as distasteful to the Athenian temperament." At the same time the State, while leaving the education of the citizen by the parents free, prescribed certain general rules. All had to be instructed in gymnastic and music. The Court of the Areopagus, moreover, as *censor morum* and guardian of the ancient constitution, exercised supervision and enforced certain laws, as we may learn from Plato and Socrates among others. But the main controlling force seems to have been the force of public opinion.

(1) *Infancy.*

Gentle and kindly as the Athenian care of infants was, yet there is no doubt that they were often taken from unwilling mothers to be exposed: the father, not the State as in Sparta, determined this. But we must note that Sparta exposed none but the physically incapable: the Athenians were more heartless. These exposed infants were sometimes picked up by dwellers outside the walls and kept, or sold, as slaves. Socrates refers to the grief of a mother deprived of her infant for the first time, and Plato, as all know, recommends exposure in his ideal State. Aristotle in his *Politics*, IV, 16, considers it unnecessary to expose children with a view to keep down the numbers of the population because other means, such as abortion, etc., can be resorted to, but he maintains "there should be a law against rearing any cripple."

On the tenth day after birth all the friends of the family assembled and brought presents. The child was named by the father. There had been a previous ceremony of sacrifice and of purification on the seventh day. The infant was carried several times round the burning hearth by the nurse followed by the mother and hence the ceremony was called *Amphidromia* or "running round". There was much eating and drinking and congratulation enlivened by music and dancing. On the fortieth day the mother paid the customary devotions at the temple. The child was then formally registered.

The first care of the infant fell to the mother and the wet-nurse, (*tiththe*) and thereafter the ordinary nurse (*tithene*). In the best period of Athens the mother always nursed her own child. Later, wet-nurses were general. As a rule peasant women or female slaves were chosen for this service, as it was long esteemed dishonouring for free women to engage in such occupations; but the slaves when engaged were treated as free, and as members of the family. But free women from the country and even free Athenian citizens sometimes undertook the duty, especially after the Peloponnesian war when, owing to the death of their husbands, they were reduced to great poverty. The noble and the rich Athenians usually preferred to get their wet-nurses from Laconia, that their children might have healthy and vigorous fostermothers. The cradles consisted of simple trays, or wicker cots, hung like hammocks. When the work of the wet-nurse—it lasted from a year to a year and a half—was ended, she was followed by the ordinary nurse—usually an elderly woman. She gave the child its food, which consisted largely, along with milk, of a kind of broth sweetened with honey. She carried the child out to get the air, and with it accompanied the mother on her visits, and even to feasts.\*

To put the child to sleep, cradle-songs and lullabies were sung. Theocritus has preserved or rather given his own idea of one of these, as sung to the twins Herakles and Iphicles:

Tender she touched their little heads and sang :  
Sleep, baby boys, a sweet and healthful sleep ;  
Sleep on my darlings safely through the night,  
Sleep, happy in your baby dreams, and wake  
With joy to greet the morning's dawning light.

—(*Theoc. Id. 24, 6.*)

To pacify and amuse the children, they used a rattle invented by the Pythagorean Archytas, a vessel of metal or wood with small stones in it. Aristotle condescends to refer to the rattle (*Polit. VIII, 6, 2*): "It is also very necessary that children should have some amusing employment: for which purpose the rattle of

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\* The child was not allowed to be exposed to the influence of the moon ; and from the day of its public acknowledgment by the father, it was provided with amulets hung round the neck that it might be protected against magical arts and the evil eye.

Archytas seems well-contrived which they give children to play with to prevent their breaking those things which are about the house, for owing to their youthfulness they cannot sit still."

The nurses had the bad habit of many modern nurses and mothers of frightening children by threatening them with bogies. The tales which the children heard from the lips of these uneducated women constituted their earliest education. Plato, Aristotle, and Chrysippus urged that care should be exercised that the tales of the nurses and pedagogues were such as ought to be told to the young.\*

The ball was a universal plaything. As the children grew older there came the hobby-horse, the game with dice (made of the knuckle-bones of animals cut into square pieces) and spinning-tops both in the house and in the open air. Toys and go-carts and "mud-pies" engaged the interest of Athenian children as of the children of all European nations. Then followed at a somewhat more advanced age a game which consisted in throwing slantingly into the water small smooth stones and counted how many leaps they made before sinking, (which we call "skimming" or "ducks and drakes"), blind man's buff, trundling hoops, and all kinds of games with the ball, walking on stilts, leap-frog, kite-flying, see-sawing on logs and swinging, etc., etc. Girls had dolls made of wax or clay and painted. Blind man's buff was played thus: The boy with his eyes bandaged moved about calling out "I will catch a brazen fly." The others answered "You will hunt it, but you won't catch it"—all the while striking him with whips till he managed to catch one of them.

At an early age the children wore shoes. Great attention was paid to their personal appearance generally. Their hair was twisted into artistic curls and drawn together over the forehead with a splendid comb, according to the fancy of mother and nurse. In the case of the girls, a slender make was aimed at by the use of stays, etc.

From all this we see that the early childhood of the Athenian boy and girl was easy and pleasant. The amusements seem to have been substantially the same as those which prevail among

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\* Quintilian says: (I, 1, 16) Chrysippus thinks that no part of a child's life should be exempt from tuition and that even the three years which he allows to the nurses might be turned to good use.

civilized races at this day. The mother's influence practically ceased from the day the boy went to school. The want of education among the Athenian women precluded their exercising much influence over the boys. But during the first seven years the mother and the nurse really laid the foundation of the child's education. Nursery rhymes, traditionary stories in which animals played a part, thereafter the rich legendary, heroic, and mythical lore of the Hellenic races were imparted to the child. A poetic and dramatic cast of mind was thus given, to be nourished in future years by the school teaching and by the public drama and civic festivals.

(2) *Childhood and Boyhood.*

(a) *State Supervision of Schools.*—The play-time ended with the seventh year. Ussing says the age at which the boy was handed over to the slave-pedagogue was determined by the age at which he was able to receive instruction, and consequently might be long before seven. The place of the female attendant was now taken by the *Paëdagogue*, who, did not impart instruction, but had only a moral oversight of his young charge both in and out of the house, and whose task, accordingly, it was always to accompany him to the schoolmaster (*Grammatist*) and gymnastic master (*Paedotribe*). For this service they generally employed a slave whom they considered adapted for such work, but still oftener one, whom on account of age and weakness, or some other defect, they could not profitably employ otherwise. Pericles said, when he saw a slave fall from a tree and break his leg, “*Voilà*, he is now a pedagogue!” The necessary consequence of this was that the free-born boy had but small respect for his *Paëdagogue*, and often and easily grew unruly in his manners. The pedagogue had charge of the boy at all times. His business was to train him in morality and good manners, and he was granted the power of beating him, if necessary. The rules as to the external bearing of boys in the street and at table were extremely strict in Athens no less than in Sparta. Doubtless the view the pedagogue took of his duties could not always be very lofty. The answer of a pedagogue, who had a high conception of his function and was asked what he did, is worth recording: “My duty is to make the good (beautiful) pleasant to boys.”

In what branches of knowledge the father should cause his child to be instructed, stood at his own discretion. By law he was bound only to instruction in gymnastic and music. This is laid down in the laws ascribed to Solon. The first of these laws as quoted by Grasberger (I, 2, 215) is: "Every citizen shall see to it that his son is instructed in gymnastic and music with grammar (*i. e.* literature). Parents who disobey this law are culpable. Only those parents shall be supported (in their old age) by their grown-up sons, who have given them due education." \*

The instruction was not provided by the State: the schools were private undertakings. But they were subjected not only to a certain moral control, but also, as I have already stated, to the general superintendence of the public authorities. Although, in obedience to the general order of the State, all Athenian free citizens sent their children to the day-schools, the length of their stay there must have been determined, as it is among all nations, by the social position of the parents. We do not need elaborate archæological inquiries to convince us of this. For the poorer class a little reading, writing, and arithmetic would suffice. But there can be no doubt that whoever wished to be accounted as truly worthy citizens of Athens, must have passed through a certain gymnastic course under the *Paedotribe* (gymnastic master), in the palaestra, the music course in its narrower sense under the *Kitharist* (teacher of music), and the literary course under the *Grammatist*. But most of the time seems to have been spent in gymnastic and play.

The schools (*Didaskaleia*) were spread over the various "wards" of the city and were to be found in all Greek towns. But it was not unusual to teach schools in the open air in some recess of a street or temple. It is probable that these open air schools were frequented by the poorer classes chiefly. Of the younger Dionysius in Corinth Justin, XXI, 5 says: "*novissime ludi magistrum professus pueros in trivio docebat.*" Almost universally, however, there were buildings devoted to school purposes. The misfortune that befel the school in the little Bœotian town of Mycalessus related by Thucydides is well-known, VII, 29. The Thracians fell upon a

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\* Monsieur Girard thinks this applied only to instruction in some trade. But if Grasberger's quotation is correct the reference was to education, generally.

boys' school which was a large one and slaughtered all the children. In 500 B. C. the school at Chios fell in as Herodotus tells us, and killed 119 out of 120 children. Pausanius tells a story of a Greek who went mad after losing a prize at Olympia, and, returning to his native place, entered a school, and pushing the pillars that sustained the roof, brought it down on the heads of 60 children burying them under the ruins. But even such schools held in buildings did not receive any State-support and were accordingly "adventure schools" supported by fees.

Æschines says that the laws prescribed the school-hours and the size of the school; but he probably only refers to the law prescribing that no school should be open before sunrise or after sunset. The schools of the better class were generally ornamented with statues of the gods, busts of heroes and pictorial illustrations of incidents in Homer. There is a fragment of such a pictorial table in the Capitoline museum at Rome—the *Tabula Iliaca* of Theodorus. On entering, the boy saluted the Master and his schoolfellows. The master sat on a high seat from which he taught; the pupils on benches: but whether the teaching was individual or collective (in classes) does not seem quite clear. The precise extent of the State supervision of schools, to which I have referred above, is also in doubt. The Court of the Areiopagus existing before Solon's time but reconstructed by him on a more popular basis, exercised great powers over all questions of morals and conduct. This power there can be no doubt, I think, they exercised in the ordinary schools as they did in the gymnasia of the ephebi or youths. The mere fact that there was no organized school-system would make them all the more ready to exercise their large and undefined powers. They were "Superintendents of good order and decency" and under cover of this it would be hard to say what they might not do. They were a check on the licence of the Democracy and the extent of their power would depend on the prudence with which they exercised it. This Areopagitic Council was shorn of much of its power in the time of Pericles, but we may suppose there would be little objection to its continued supervision of morals and conduct. Among much that is uncertain we may safely conclude generally that either through the agency of the Sophronists or Strategi the authorities in Athens kept a watchful eye on schools



—especially the gymnastic schools, but without vexatious interference.

(b.) *Primary Instruction and Methods—Literary Education.*

The music curriculum was divided into two courses, one specially literary, and one specially musical.

In the literary course under the *Grammatist* the first elements of reading, writing, and arithmetic were learned.

*Reading.*—In learning to read, children learned synthetically *i. e.* they learned the individual letters first by heart, then their sounds, then as combined into meaningless syllables, and then into words. The analytic method of taking words first and analysing the various sounds in them and teaching these on phonic principles, is held by some to have been practised, but of this there is no sufficient evidence. “We,” says Dionysius of Halicarnassus, who died about the beginning of the Christian era, “learn first the names of the letters, then their shape and functions, then the syllables and their properties *i. e.* their accent and correct articulation, then kinds of declensions: lastly, the parts of speech, and the particular mutations connected with each, as inflexion, number, contraction, accents, position in the sentence; then we begin to read and to write, at first in syllables and slowly, but when we have attained the necessary certainty, easily and quickly. *De Compos. Verb. c. 25.*”

It is said that the teacher wrote down what was to be learned and the children copied it,—this doubtless before manuscripts were common. But there were in use also plaques of baked earth on which letters and syllables were written or painted.

The chief difficulties to be encountered by the child were the learning of the proper accent as these were not indicated by signs, and the separating of one word from another, as words were in those days written continuously without a break. There was moreover no punctuation. It is possible that, inasmuch as good, nay merely intelligible, reading was in these circumstances possible only when the sense was fully grasped, the want of separation of words and of punctuation may have contributed largely to mental discipline as well as to good elocution. The manuscripts were either folded or rolled.

After the pupil was able to read, beautiful reading was practised—special attention being paid to the length and shortness of

syllables and to the accentuation. Purity of articulation and accent were specially attended to. They were taught the raising and lowering of the voice and to bring out the melody and rhythm of the sentences, and all this with distinct enunciation and expression. Homer served as the usual reading-book; then Hesiod, Theognis, Phocylides and Solon, as well as the fables of Æsop, and generally "poems in which," as Protagoras says in Plato, "were contained many admonitions and illustrations of conduct, also praise and eulogy of distinguished men, that the boys might admiringly imitate them, and strive themselves also to become distinguished." At an early period collections of the most choice specimens of the poetic art (*anthologies*) were used for the purpose of instruction. These poems, especially Homer, Hesiod, and Theognis, served at the same time for drill in language and for recitation, whereby on the one hand the memory was developed and the imagination strengthened, on the other the heroic forms of antiquity and healthy primitive utterances regarding morality and full of homely common sense were deeply engraved on the young mind. The poems were explained to the pupils and questions were asked. Homer was regarded not merely as a poet, but as an inspired moral teacher, and great portions of his poems were learned by heart. The Iliad and the Odyssey were in truth the Bible of the Greeks. There was also much practice of dictation and learning by heart of what was written down from the master's dictation—a practice which continued in all schools and universities till after the invention of printing. In the Greek schools the master recited and the scholar repeated after him until he could say the passage by himself. The scarcity of books had its advantages, as it compelled the masters to resort more than they would otherwise have done, to oral teaching in which mind meets mind without the interposition of the printed page.\*

*Arithmetic.*—In arithmetic only so much was taught (owing, doubtless, to the cumbrous system of notation) as was necessary for the reckonings of the market-place. The Greeks attained great proficiency within these limits. An *abacus* or calculating-board was in use (but not the same as our modern frame) and the fingers were freely used to assist in calculation.

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\* See an interesting passage in Plato's *Phædrus*. Jowett's Plato I, 614.

*Writing.*—For writing they used in earlier times tablets covered with wax and a stylus or graver one end of the style being flattened for rubbing out what was written. These tablets were often diptychs and triptychs. For the children who could not yet write, lines were drawn and a copy set with the stylus; they imitated the copy, writing on their knees, there being no desks. Some say they began by tracing the letters as lightly written by the master (the master guiding the hand); and this is highly probable. They drew straight lines with a ruler to keep the writing regular. Sometimes they carried the stylus over letters cut in wooden tablets. Plato thought very little of writing and considered that not too much time should be given to it. It was enough to be able to write legibly. When older, the pupils wrote with pen (*calamus*) and ink on papyrus or parchment. Owing to the cost of parchment they practised on the back of leaves already written on one side.

*Drawing.*—Drawing was much insisted on by Aristotle (*Polit.* VIII, 3). It was not till his time that it began to be taught in the ordinary schools. But in the course of the fourth century B. C. it entered largely, if not always, into the general education according to Grasberger and others. It was first introduced from Sicily. “*Pamphili auctoritate effectum est Sicilye primum, deinde et in tota Græciâ, ut pueri ingenui omnes artem graphicen, hoc est picturam in buto, docerentur, recipereturque ars ea in primum gradum liberalium.*” The drawing was on smooth boxwood surfaces—white on a black ground, or red and black on a white ground. The instrument used was a pencil.

*Geometry.*—Highly as both Aristotle and Plato esteemed geometry as a school subject, it would appear that it was not till the later period of Athenian education (end of 5th century B. C.) that it was introduced into the schools.

Geography was sometimes taught and maps began to come into use about the time of Plato.

### (c) *Secondary Education and Methods.*

The *Grammatist* was the name of the elementary teacher. Those boys who could afford to continue their education went in Romano-Hellenic times but not during the purely Hellenic period,

to a *Grammaticus*; but it must be understood that the line of demarcation between these teachers was by no means till later times clear. The "secondary" instruction was given by the *Grammatist* until the two functions were differentiated. In Scotland we have had a similar experience.

In what did what we should call the "secondary" education of the young Athenian consist before secondary schools taught by *Grammatici* took definite form and this probably not till about 300 B. C.? It is difficult to say. It was not till about 13 years of age that a boy began to learn to play a musical instrument and this, with the lyric poetry with which music was always associated and the continued reading and recitation of the poetry seems to have constituted the secondary instruction—at least till about 370 B. C. After that date we know that drawing and geometry, and later grammar began to enter into the curriculum of those who continued at school after the primary period. It would be at this time that the differentiation between primary and secondary schools would naturally arise. We shall see the distinction clearly marked, nay emphasized in Rome (which followed Greece in all educational matters) certainly not later than 150 years B. C. In the secondary school of the *Grammaticus* when it was finally recognized, grammar and literary criticism were leading studies and the foundations laid for subsequent instruction in rhetoric and oratory, into which studies the *Grammaticus* frequently carried his pupils.

The youths after leaving the *Grammaticus* went (from about 400 B. C.) to the *Sophists* for teaching of rhetoric, &c. These were the highest instructors.

It is not to be supposed that the system of education above sketched was in any way formally organised. It was a voluntary and natural growth, and underwent all the fluctuations that are inherent in voluntary institutions.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

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